

TRANSPARENT WASH

Prepared exclusively for students of
ART INSTRUCTION SCHOOLS

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In today's world of commercial art, transparent wash is not only used alone but is very often used in effective combination with ink, charcoal, and even pencil. When the subtle shadings of transparent wash are joined with the strong, sharp lines that are characteristic of charcoal, ink and pencil, the artist is able to add immensely to the unique effects possible with each individual medium.

But whether the transparent wash is used alone or in combination with other media, the primary appeal of the successful work lies in the clean but casual quality of wash.

Sometimes you will see a flat wash technique employed which means that there is no gradual blending or shading of the various gray tones. This stylized approach has an apparent simplicity, but, as this lesson will demonstrate, the simplicity conceals a complex and interesting pattern of shadow and light.

More often used, however, is the shaded wash technique involving a careful blending of values. In this lesson you will learn how to blend these values without sacrificing the strong contrast of bright highlights and dark shadows which give a wash drawing its dramatic snap. This shaded wash technique is used very often in today's advertising, especially to achieve such special effects as the smooth, luxurious stroke of fur, the soft fuzzy texture of a towel or the crisp bright surface of glassware.



Fashion figure by Jim Smith

Transparent Wash

The ingredients of a transparent wash are simple but the visual impact of a well done wash drawing is strong, clean and truly exciting.

To begin a transparent wash all you need is a good water soluble black, water, a good sable brush or two, a piece of quality paper or illustration board and one special ingredient: the desire to master this rewarding medium. The special desire is important because only patient practice can give a student-artist the confident stroke, delicate pressure and fluid brushwork that are so essential in transparent wash. The secret of the free, almost casual effect of a finished transparent wash is mastery of the medium.

Achieving this mastery is well worth the extra practice because transparent wash is a popular medium for both commercial and fine artists. But more important, as your skill increases, this demanding medium becomes more and more satisfying to you, the artist. And, of course, once the discipline is learned, you have a valuable talent that will never be forgotten. It's a basic truth that anything really worth accomplishing takes time and vigorous effort.

The rewards of mastering the transparent wash medium are illustrated in this excellent fashion figure. The fashion artist, more than any other commercial artist, depends on his ability to execute

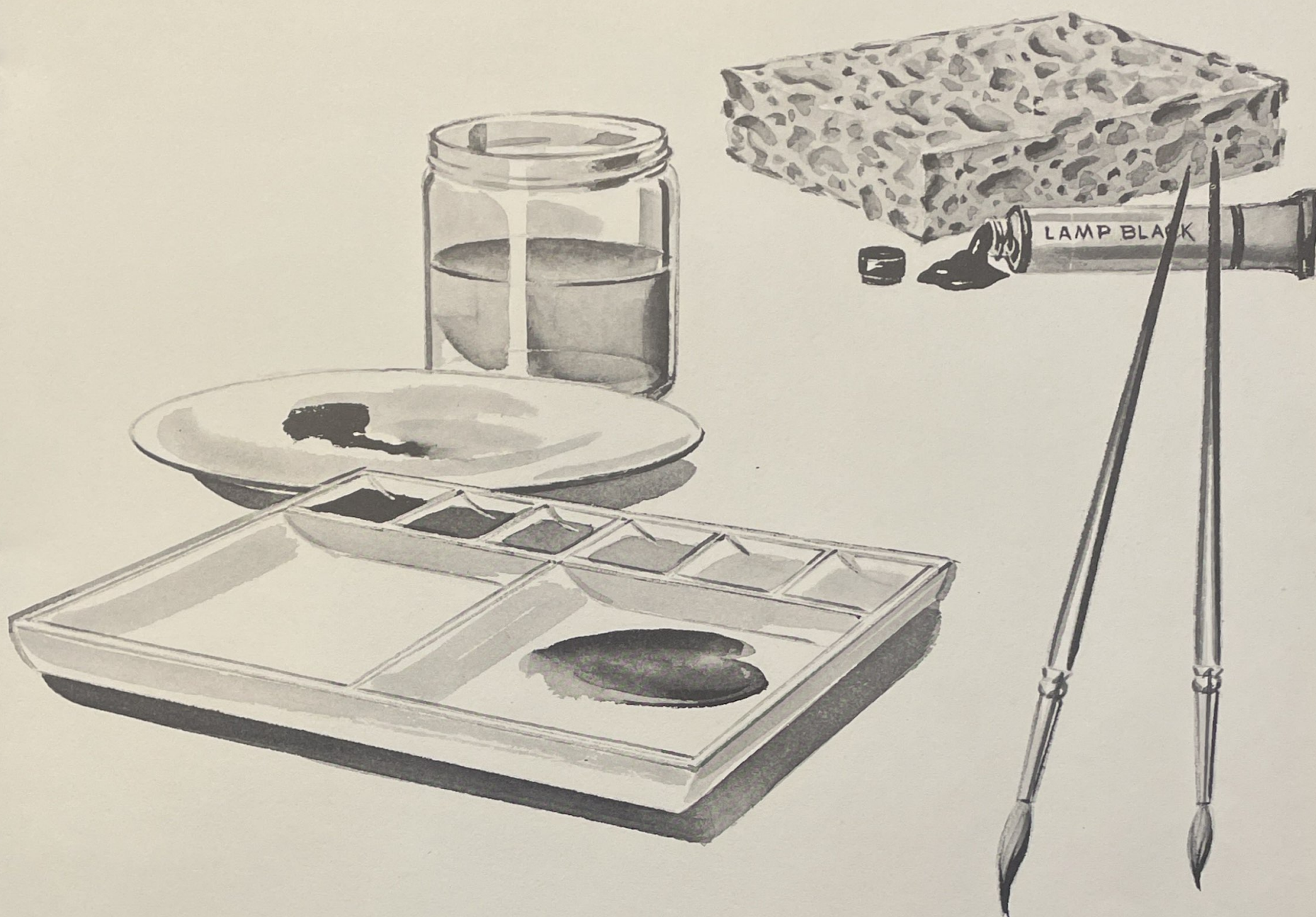
clean sparkling wash drawings. This group of craftsmen are the leaders in handling transparent wash. The pages of your daily and Sunday newspapers are "jam-packed" with the proof of their skill. In these periodicals as well as in high quality fashion magazines, catalogs, etc., you can see their exciting wash techniques. Wash is important in all other areas of commercial art too. Merchandise, food, cars, and everything else that is for sale can be made appealing through crisp drawings in wash. Dramatic illustrations for stories are often done in wash and in mixed rendering using wash and pencil, wash and ink or charcoal and wash. The transparent look plus the wide range of values make wash a valuable servant to the commercial artist. Studio artists and advertising designers rely on it for daily assignments. And, not to be left out, fine artists also use transparent wash. Portraits, landscapes and still life arrangements in water color are really wash drawings done with color. The methods for doing these water colors are the same as for transparent wash. In both, a great deal of clear water is mixed with the paint allowing the paper to show through in all but the darkest of values. A transparent wash never builds up thickness of paint as do tempera and oil paints.

Landscape by Chuck Gravem



Regardless of where you live you can find interesting subjects to paint in transparent wash. This is a country scene but it was drawn and painted in the city! After spending a weekend in the country, the artist composed this picture from one of the buildings he saw on his trip. To do this, he relied entirely on memory; he had no sketches or photo-

graphs to help him. You may not be ready to do memory drawings without research yet, but it's a good idea to study your surroundings carefully. When you look at a street scene, or a landscape, concentrate on the arrangement of the values. Note how the light and shadows fall. Study every detail. In short, try to see the scene as a painting.



Materials

The materials needed for a transparent wash may be simple but they should be of good quality. The beauty of a finished transparent wash drawing usually depends on the quality of the materials used. To lessen the chance of having your wash drawing appear streaked and unattractive, use good brushes and high quality paper.

The paper should have a grained surface and be heavy enough to remain flat and firm when it is wet. For practical work, inexpensive Bond or a fairly heavy water color paper will be suitable. The paper should be heavy enough to keep it from warping when the washes are applied. For finished drawings, heavy water color paper or illustration board is desirable.

The best brushes are made of sable and the hairs of each brush stay together to form a neat, single point when the brush is properly filled with wash. If the hairs spread, or form a double point when wet, the brush is inferior and you will not be able to do your best work with it. Your brushes from the INK LESSON will be ample for your first wash experiments. Later, however, you may wish to try working with larger brushes.

The usual pigment (paint) in a transparent wash is "lamp

black", although some artists also like black India drawing ink or black water color. You may want to experiment with all of these. However, for your lesson assignments, we suggest lamp black. It's the choice of the majority of commercial artists.

In most cases, ordinary tap water will do for mixing with your lamp black. But, if excessive lime or minerals in your tap water prevent your tones from mixing smoothly, you should use distilled water or rain water.

As a palette for mixing your lamp black and water, you may use the china palette listed in your art supply catalog or you may use any saucer or dish. The shallow, flat bottomed pans used by butchers are excellent, but any smooth china, glass or porcelain container will serve. Preferably this should be white so you can see and judge the values of paint you are mixing.

You will also need: a large jar, glass or bowl filled with clear water; a drawing board to tape your paper to; masking tape or a few tacks; and a paint rag to wipe your brushes on. Any soft absorbent material will do. A sponge is also necessary to wet down your paper, or, if you don't have a sponge handy, a wad of cotton will do.

Special Papers

Choosing the correct paper will often determine whether you do good work or whether your wash will be uneven and streaked. A student will find his art improving by "leaps and bounds" when he switches from cheap paper to paper of better quality.

To start, paper must have a certain weight to remain firm and flat when wetted by the wash. If the paper is too light, it will buckle producing low depressions where the wash will collect. When these pools of wash dry they will appear darker than the surrounding area.

Illustration board is ideal for wash because it has an absorbent surface and because it is several ply thick; it won't buckle when a wash is applied. Illustration board is quite expensive, however, and is used mainly for finished drawings. For practice, you will get good results on fairly heavy water color paper.

Many papers don't have absorbent surfaces and on these a wash will run, bubble and streak. Hard slick papers used for pen and ink are good examples. A "cold press" paper with a little tooth is best for wash. Shown here are some demonstrations of wash drawings on various papers. Experiment with various papers.



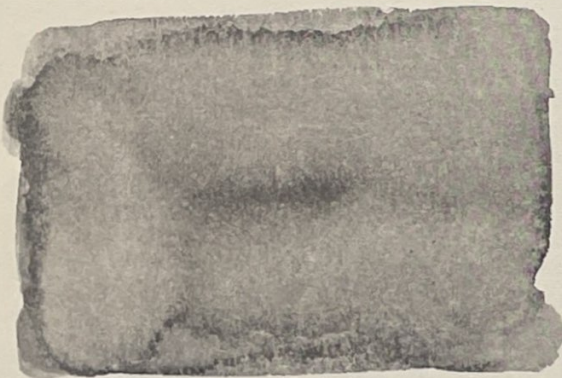
This value swatch is on a medium weight water color paper. It has very little tooth but a very absorbent surface. This is a good paper for smooth, precise wash drawings.



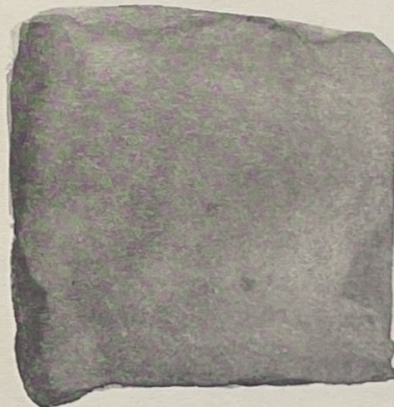
For this demonstration a medium weight, medium tooth water color paper was used. The extra roughness of the surface can be seen as small white dots (where the wash didn't cover).



Another textured paper was used for this wash. Again the tooth can be seen at the outer edges of the swatch. Many artists like this texture, as it breaks up a tone and adds "sparkle."



Medium (regular) surfaced illustration board is always good for wash drawing. The surface has tooth and is absorbent enough to "hold" the color. Also, the board will not warp no matter how many washes are applied.

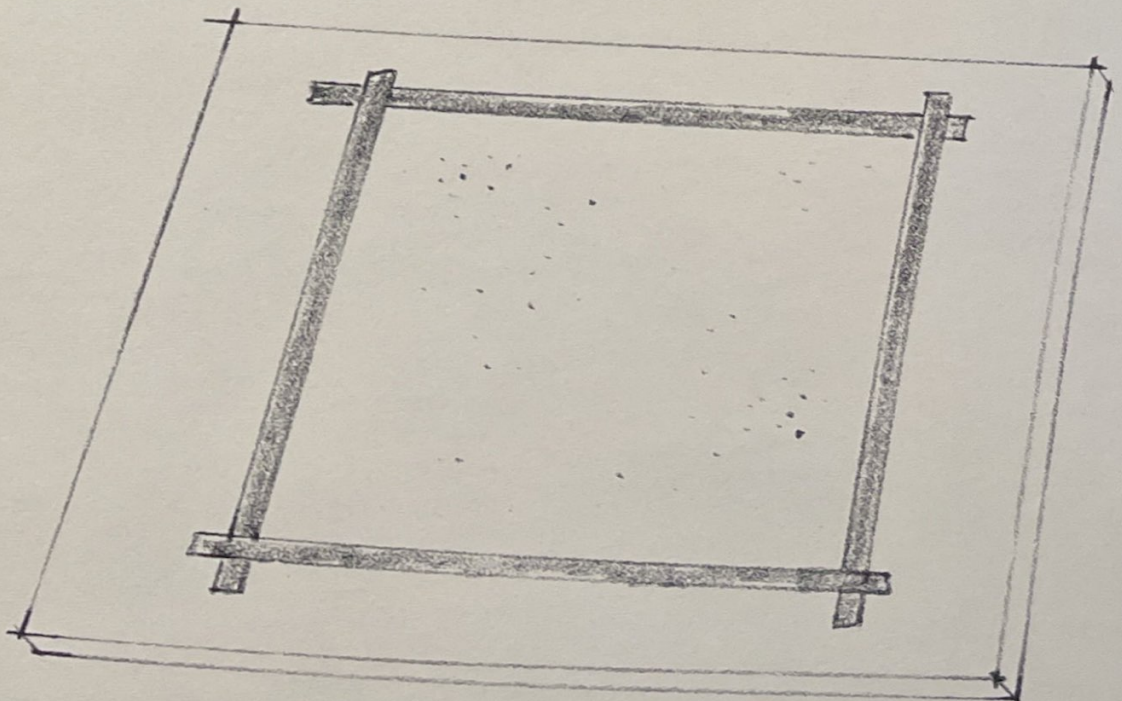


This wash is on plate Bristol board which works fairly well. However, plate Bristol is a little slick; a kid (vellum) Bristol would be better. Kid has more tooth which usually insures a smoother wash.



Here is an example of how a wash will look on a slick, non-absorbent surface. The cardboard backing of a tracing paper tablet was used. The results are streaked . . . uneven . . . unattractive.

Tipping your drawing board at an angle is helpful for painting a smooth wash. You may prop books behind it, or you may pull the near edge of the board off your drawing table and drop it in your lap. This angle will help the wash to flow more evenly. With your board on a slant, you will want to start painting all your washes at the top of the paper. This way the water (puddle) will flow down the natural slant of the board. You will also need to tape or tack your paper to prevent it from slipping.



WHAT TO DO

Practice doing a step by step wash drawing like the example of the country scene on this page. Take a sheet of tracing paper and actually make a copy of this arrangement. Then, using the method described earlier, transfer this scene to a sheet of illustration board

or heavy water color paper. Using the art on this page as a guide, start your light tones first and develop the drawing to its finished stage. Try to make use of the same techniques the artist employed, wet-on-wet blending, using an eraser to lighten areas, scraping with a knife, etc.



In the first demonstration, a light gray wash covers almost all of the elements in the picture. You can still see some of the pencil guide lines that mark off the structure of the house, hills and trees. These lines are very light and have been transferred from a preliminary sketch. Even before this first wash, the artist made a rough sketch to plan the arrangement of his subjects and as a guide for the values. This kind of planning is very important. Remember, it is difficult to make changes in wash, so you must have a good basic drawing and a definite idea of the value arrangement before starting to paint. Also, before painting, tack or tape your paper to your drawing board so it won't buckle when the wet washes are applied.



Moistening the paper before painting the first wash will help the wash flow more evenly. Use your sponge and clean, clear water. Then wait until most of this water has soaked into the paper (until you can no longer see any reflections on the paper) before applying the first wash. Always mix more wash than you will need so you won't have to stop in the middle of your work. Stopping to paint back into a partially dry wash produces streaks and hard edges. In this demonstration the artist added a dark value, giving depth and definition to the picture. You can work light to dark, like this, or you may want to try painting the dark accents first with the light tones floated in last.

Wash demonstrations by Jack Hagen



When doing flat washes, as in the first two demonstrations, you must wait for each wash to dry before painting the next. If you start painting too soon the washes will blend together and the edge and value contrast between them will be lost. There are times, however, when you want blending and shading. For this, you purposely add a wash to a partially wet area so the two will "bleed" or run together. This wet-on-wet method can be seen on the mail box and foreground trees.

You can erase with sandpaper or an eraser to lighten an area. This should be done when the wash is dry or the paper will tear. Scraping

with a knife or razor blade, also produces "white" details. Note the branches on the background trees.

If you want to darken an area that is already dry, just float another wash over it. Or, to lighten a dry area, wet it first with clear water and then go back in a few moments with a sponge or clean brush and pick up some of the paint. You also start with a clean water wash to blend into a section that is dry. This water will soften the first (dry) wash so your new wash will blend into it without making a hard edge.

Painting A Flat Wash

There will be many times in doing a wash drawing that you will not need any blending or mixing of tone but rather will want large areas of flat wash. Rendering this type of wash is important to an artist, and, no matter how talented, most artists need to practice it in order to obtain desirable results.

WHAT TO DO

Start your work by marking off a sheet of paper with several six by six inch squares. These squares will give you a definite goal to aim for. Now, tack or tape your paper down on the drawing board and tilt the board to help the wash flow evenly.

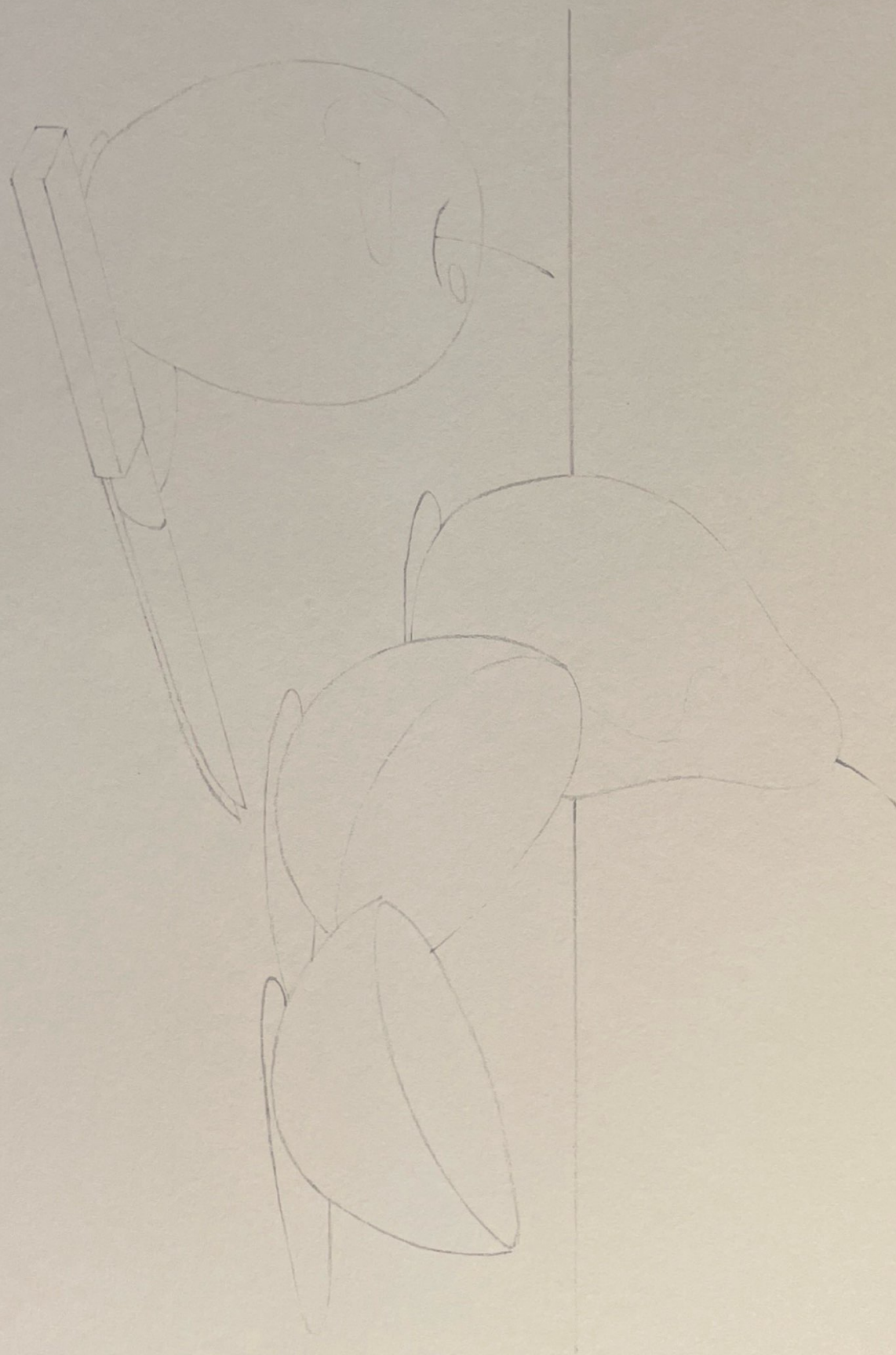
For this exercise mix a large quantity of fairly dark value and, before painting, moisten the first square with your sponge. Wetting the paper with clear water before painting helps to keep the wash moving smoothly. Don't begin your work immediately, however. Let the paper dry partially. Wait until you can no longer see the reflection of any water on the paper.

Fill your brush with a good amount of wash and start the first square in the upper left-hand corner. Pull the stroke from the left corner to the right. Dip your brush back into the reservoir of wash and make a second stroke from the right side to the left. The third stroke should follow the same principle; it should overlap the bottom of the second stroke and be drawn across the entire square without stopping. Always pull, never push your brush.

Each time you make a brush stroke on your paper you will notice that some of the wash forms a "puddle" at the lower edge of the stroke. When you make your next stroke you want to overlap into this puddle and add to it. And, after you have completed the last stroke on the bottom of the square, dry your brush on your paint cloth and go back to pick up the excess water.

When the square dries it should be one even tone of gray. If, however, your work is not "velvet smooth," there may be several explanations. First, you may not have mixed enough wash to cover the entire area. Stopping to mix more paint and then trying to work back into a partially dried area usually produces streaks or hard edges. Secondly, if your paper is not heavy enough, it will stretch and buckle when a wash is applied. Buckling paper produces depressions where your wash will collect. When dry, these will appear darker than the surrounding value. Another reason might be that you attempted to work back into your wash to make a correction. These areas will show up as hard edges or streaks. It's very difficult to paint over a partially dry area without the brush strokes showing.

Applying a flat wash sometimes takes a good deal of practice. Therefore, do not feel that you have been wasting your paper if your work isn't perfect at first. And, do not, DO NOT feel discouraged. Almost everyone has some difficulties at first. But anyone who is willing to give it another try or two will achieve perfection in time.



TRANSPARENT WASH LESSON ASSIGNMENT

Student No. _____ Date _____

Name _____

Street No. _____

City _____ State _____

TRANSPARENT WASH TEST

Directions: Study each question before choosing the correct answer. For the True-False questions, put an X in the box under "T" if you think the statement is correct or True. If you think the statement is wrong or False, put an X in the box under the "F".

For the Multiple Choice questions, read the first part of the item to decide what the question is trying to test. Do NOT mark the answer until you have read *all* of the answers. Then, choose the answer which you think best answers or completes the sentence. Write the letter for this answer in the space next to the question number.

Complete the test and send it to us with your Transparent Wash Assignment.

True-False Questions

T F

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | 1. Transparent wash should usually be done on a lightweight, smooth-surface paper. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 2. The most common pigment used by commercial artists for wash drawing is lamp black. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 3. Black India ink is also used frequently for wash drawing. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 4. If you dampen your paper before you begin to apply the wash, this is called the "wet-on-wet" technique of rendering. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 5. If your paper buckles when you are doing a wash drawing, it is because your paper is too thick (heavy). |
| ☐ | ☐ | 6. To mix a lighter value for your transparent wash work, you should add opaque white. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 7. It is good practice to do a good pencil drawing of your subject before doing the finished wash drawing. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 8. It is a good idea to plan your arrangement of light and dark areas before you begin the application of the wash medium. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 9. Although many of the demonstrations show the artist working from light to dark, it is possible to do a good wash drawing working with the dark values first. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 10. Wash drawing is a fairly difficult type of artwork that requires a great deal of practice. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 11. When doing a wash drawing, one must never allow any of the white of the paper to show through. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 12. Wash drawing is important only to those people who plan to be fashion illustrators. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 13. To get a good, smooth wash, it helps to have the drawing surface tilted. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 14. The quality of your finished wash drawing will be influenced greatly by the quality of the materials and tools you use. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 15. Doing a "flat wash" means that you have your drawing board lying flat on the table rather than tilted. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 16. You can use rubber cement to mask out areas of a wash drawing that you want to remain white. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 17. To get the texture of furs, artists frequently use a wet-on-wet technique. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 18. A strong light and shadow pattern usually adds sparkle to a wash drawing. |
| ☐ | ☐ | 19. Transparent wash is a limited medium (very few subjects lend themselves to rendering in wash). |
| ☐ | ☐ | 20. You can use sandpaper or an eraser to lighten an area on a wash drawing. |

Continued on Back

Remember to send your Transparent Wash Practice sheet, your Transparent Wash Assignment and this test to the school together.

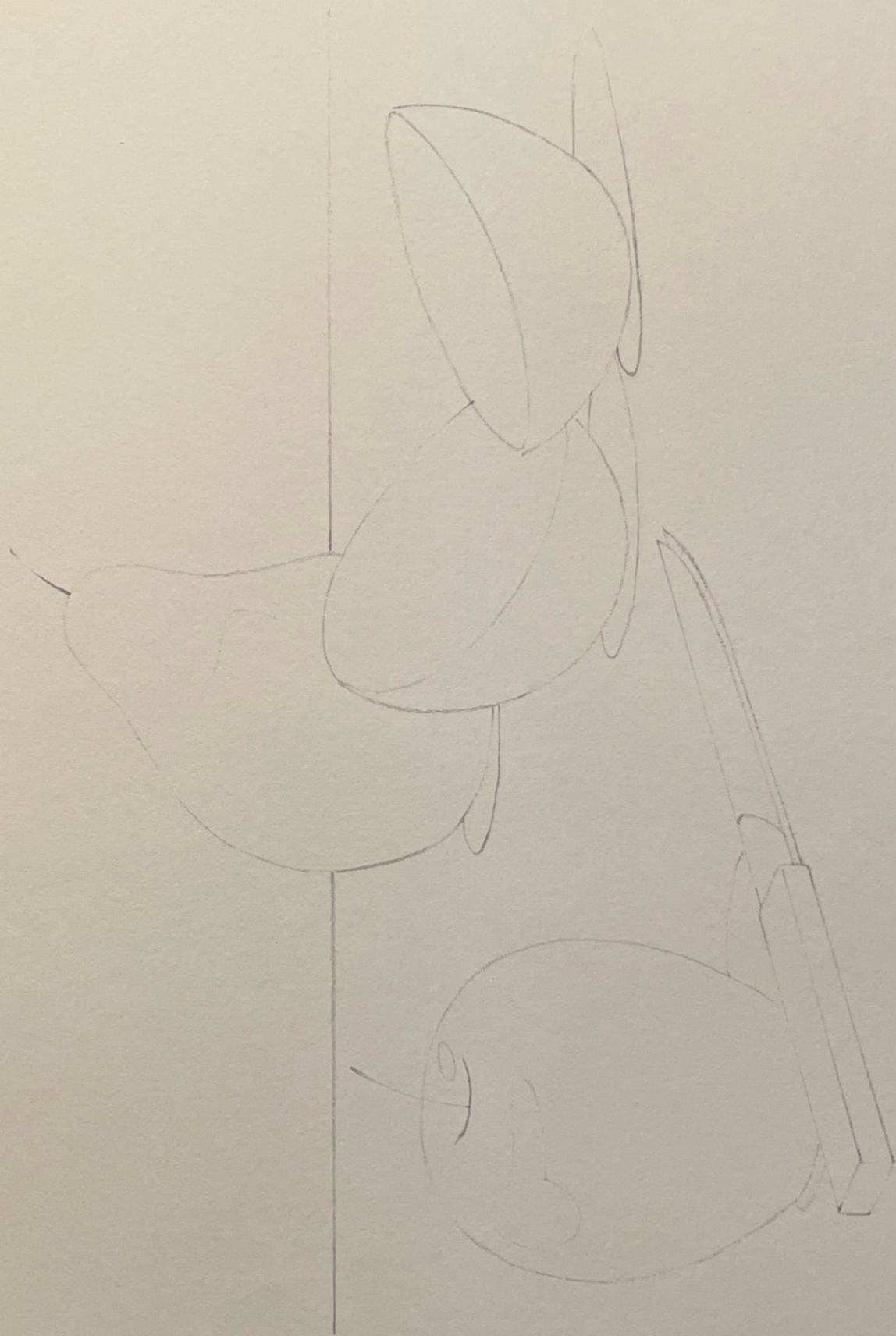
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- _____ 21. For pigment in a wash drawing you can use:
- a. Lamp black.
 - b. Black watercolor.
 - c. Black India drawing ink.
 - d. All of the above.
- _____ 22. When painting a wash drawing with your drawing board tipped at an angle, you should start:
- a. In the lower right portion of the paper.
 - b. At the top of the drawing.
 - c. At the bottom of the drawing.
 - d. In the middle of the drawing.
- _____ 23. To get a strong contrast between your light and dark tones you should:
- a. Press very hard with your brush at certain times.
 - b. Use opaque white for the whites.
 - c. Avoid using any gray tones in your drawing.
 - d. Have your values range from the white of the paper to pure black pigment.
- _____ 24. To make changes of tone in a flat wash drawing, an artist will usually:
- a. Wait until each wash is dry before adding the next tone or value.
 - b. Use a wet-on-wet technique to insure the right gradations.
 - c. Use the light to dark method of grading wash tones.
 - d. Use the dark to light method of grading wash tones.
- _____ 25. In work from dark to light in grading a wash, you dip your brush in clear water so that:
- a. Your brush is kept clean at all times.
 - b. You keep your paper wet enough that it will buckle.
 - c. The added water will dilute and reduce the pigment in the wash.
 - d. You get the feathery or soft effect that will show the texture of fur.



TRANSPARENT WASH LESSON ASSIGNMENT

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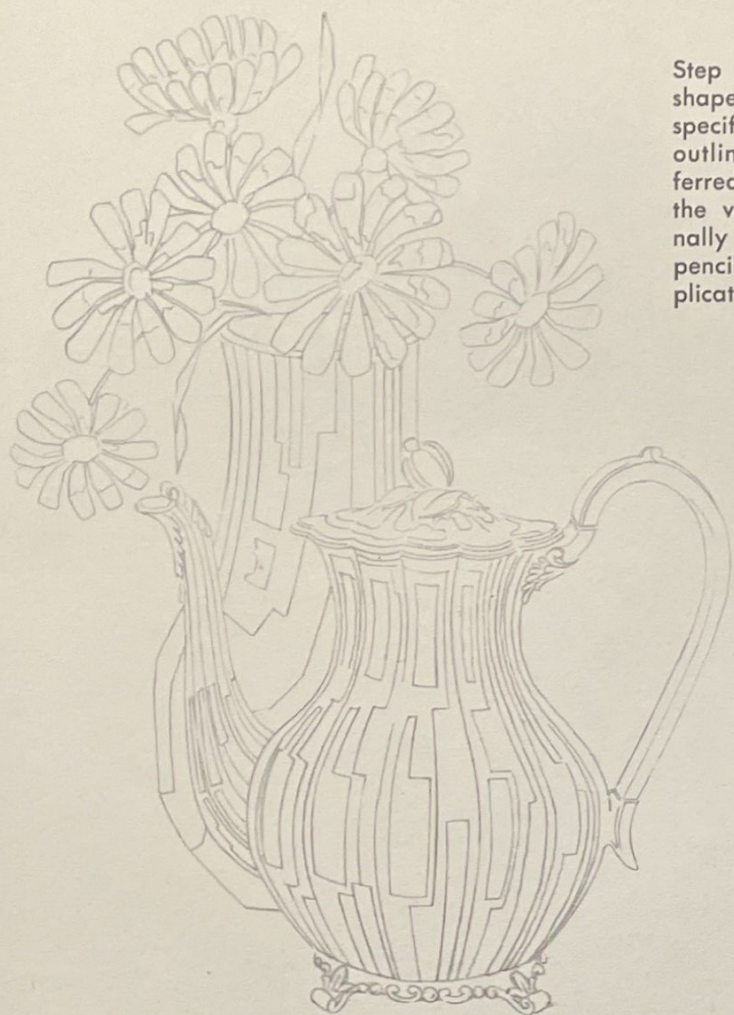
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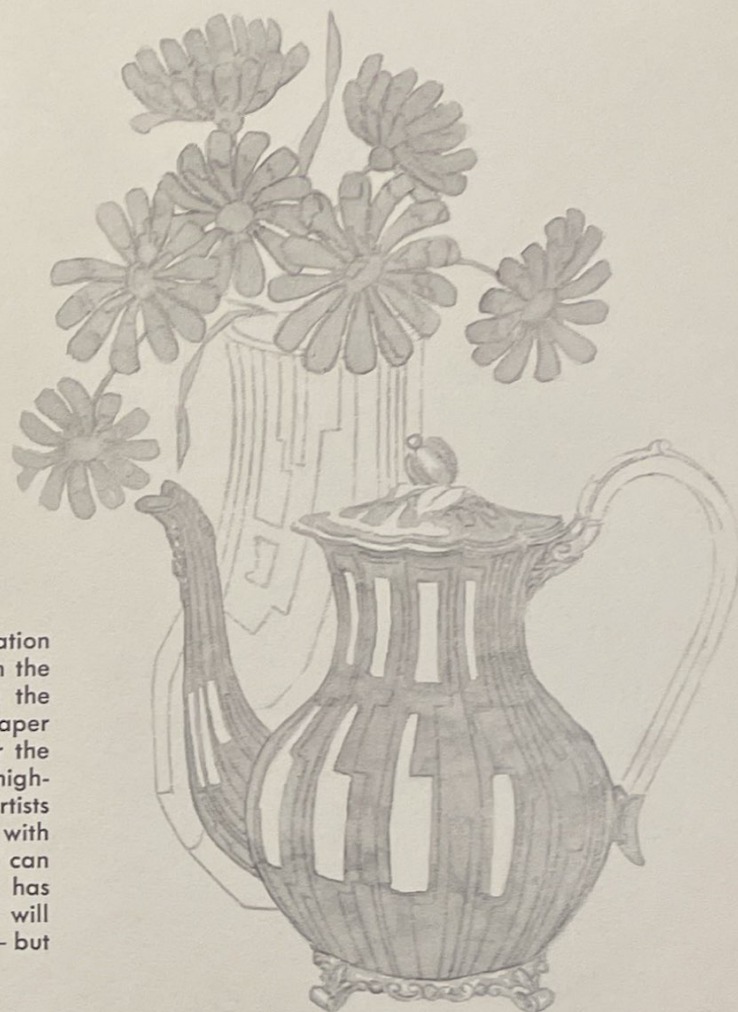
A Flat Wash Drawing

Although wash is an excellent-medium for blending and modeling, it is often used successfully in a flat style. In this method, the artist does not attempt any wet-on-wet shading; he does not blend or mix any value gradations. Changes of tone in a flat wash must

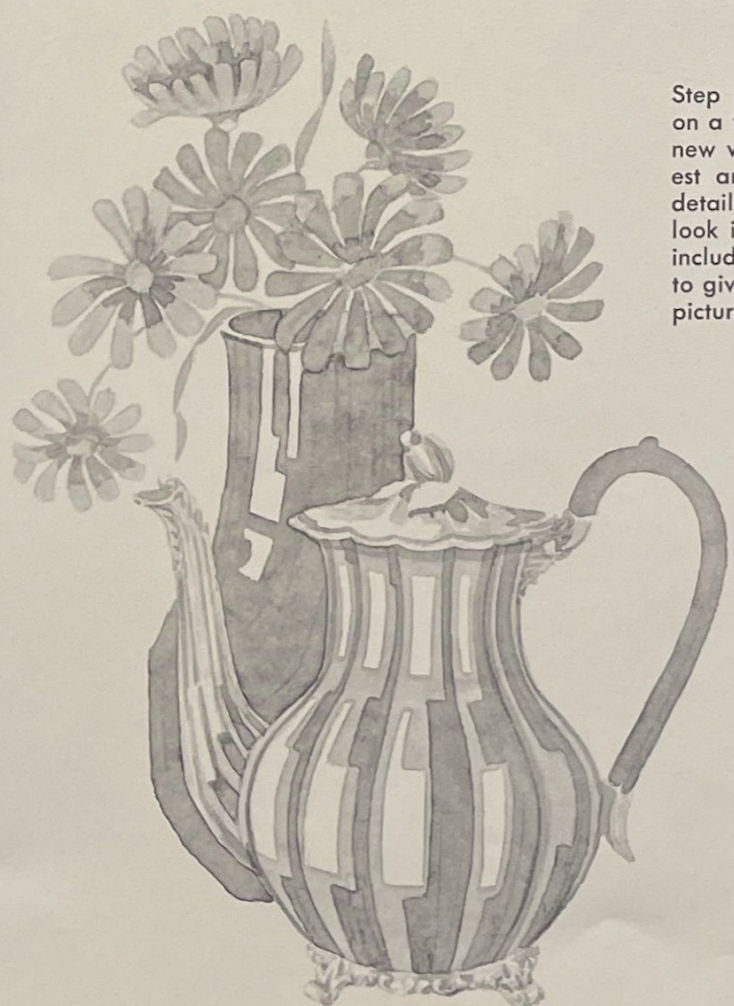
be done by painting each new value separately. Working this way means you must wait till each wash is perfectly dry before adding the next. Such a method can be used to complete an entire picture or, as you can see in the gallery section, a flat wash also combines well with other wash techniques.



Step number one shows the basic shape of the objects and also the specific areas of tone for each. This outline drawing has been transferred from a pencil sketch where the value arrangement was originally planned. The first drawing in pencil serves as a guide for the application of wash.



Step number two is the application of the first, light wash value on the flowers and the tea server in the foreground. The white of the paper is allowed to show through for the highlights. Painting around highlights is slow work and some artists prefer to mask these areas out with tape or rubber cement (which can be rubbed off after the wash has been applied). Too, an eraser will often eliminate light washes — but use it with care.



Step number three begins to take on a finished look. In this stage the new value adds contrast and interest and also creates some of the details. To avoid an over-simplified look in a flat wash, the artist must include light and shadow patterns to give interest to each area of the picture.



Step number four is the final stage where the darkest value is painted to create strong contrasts and details. In applying this value, the artist uses it throughout the total design to attain unity and balance.

Art by Charles Murphy

Grading Wash Tones

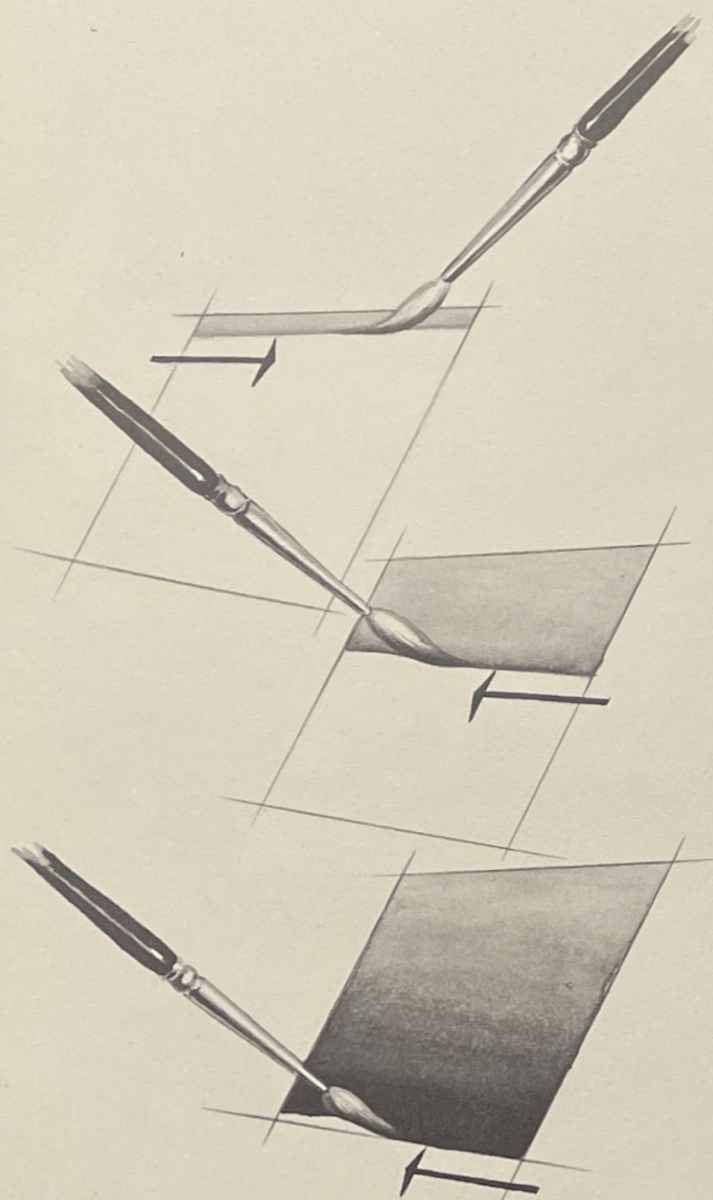
Just as using a large area of completely flat tone is desirable in some drawings, there are other times when variations in tone are needed. For a landscape, or the background in an illustration, the

sky may be modeled to show space and depth. In advertisements showing objects or figures, gradations of tone help to bring out form and solidity. This method of changing values is something you will want to do with ease because you will often use it in your pictures.

WHAT TO DO: Dark to Light

To practice grading a wash you can mark off squares just as you did for the flat-wash experiments. The big difference between this new method and a flat wash is that you won't need to mix much wash this time. After the first stroke you will use clear water! The clean, clear water dilutes and reduces the pigment in your wash, which in turn lightens the value.

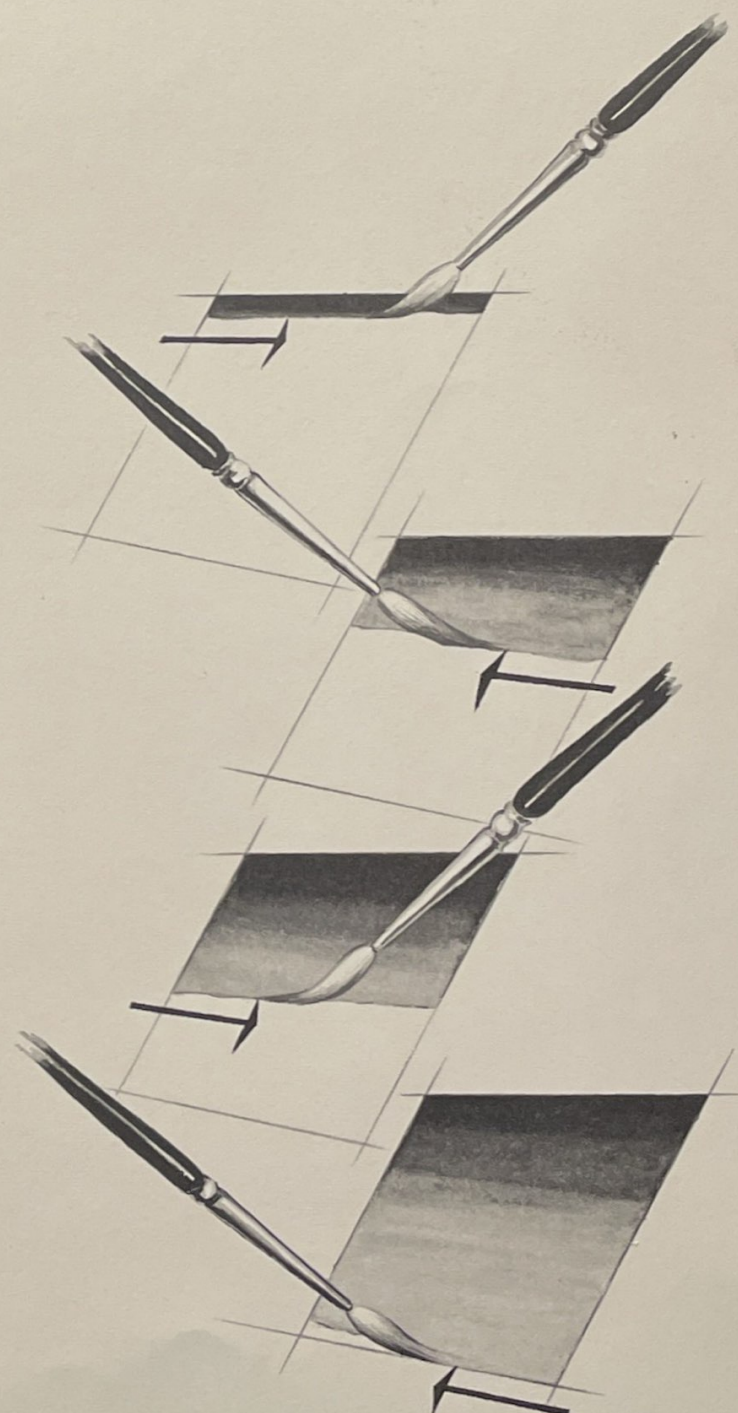
To begin, mix a fairly dark tone and load your brush with as much color as it will hold without dripping. Make the first stroke across the top of the square, pulling the brush from left to right if you are right handed. Now, dip your brush partially into your water container and make a second stroke, overlapping the first. Pull the second stroke from the right back to the left. For the third stroke again pick up some clean water on your brush and overlap it into the "puddle" as you sweep it across the paper. By adding clear water to each new stroke the amount of paint (tone) will be lessened. If you do this correctly, the square will appear quite dark at the top and gradually become lighter near the bottom. The change in tone should dry smooth and even, with no hard edges or streaks.



WHAT TO DO: Light to Dark

When working from light to dark, you use a procedure quite different from either of the first two wash methods. For this exercise you begin with only a small amount of pigment in your brush. Then dip your brush in clear water. Therefore, your first stroke will be quite light in value. For the second stroke you pick up a brush of "full strength" wash. This stroke will overlap into the puddle from the first and will add more pigment to the wash. With each new stroke you dip into your mixing tray and add more and more paint, making darker and darker tones. At the end of the square, clean your brush on your paint cloth and then go back to pick up the excess wash so it won't run and smear.

Don't be afraid to spoil many sheets of practice paper with these exercises. Remember, if you are using a fairly good quality paper, you can turn the paper over when it dries and use the other side for more practice work. Keep each square numbered so you can check your progress. Even after five tries you will see improvement. And, after fifteen or twenty, if you are a real worker, you should be able to float a wash that's nearly perfect! Practice, practice and then practice again!



Special Effects

Unusual wash techniques can often dress up an ordinary picture and give it a unique "creative touch." These of course can't replace good drawing or an ability to do a smooth wash, but they do come in handy on many assignments. Most special effects are the result

of using a wash in a new and different manner. They are "happy accidents" that come from your own personal experiments. So, when working, keep an eye out for the unusual, and some day you will be able to incorporate it into one of your finished wash drawings. Make a note to yourself of how you achieve each effect and keep it and the wash experiment in your file.

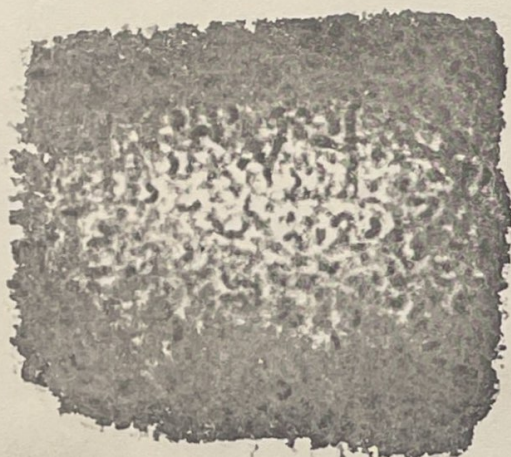


For the soft fluid look of this wet-on-wet technique, you paint into a wash that is only partially dry. Because your first wash is still moist, the second value will spread and blend into the first. This is good on fur texture and reflective surfaces like china, glass and silver.



Here is another example of wet-on-wet blending. For this, the drawing board was tipped so the second gray would run and streak through

the first. Such an effect would be very good in doing a snow scene or to indicate storm clouds.



To lighten an area, you can pick up some of the color by rubbing it with sandpaper or an eraser. On this demonstration, sandpaper was used. An interesting texture results because the paper has a rough surface.



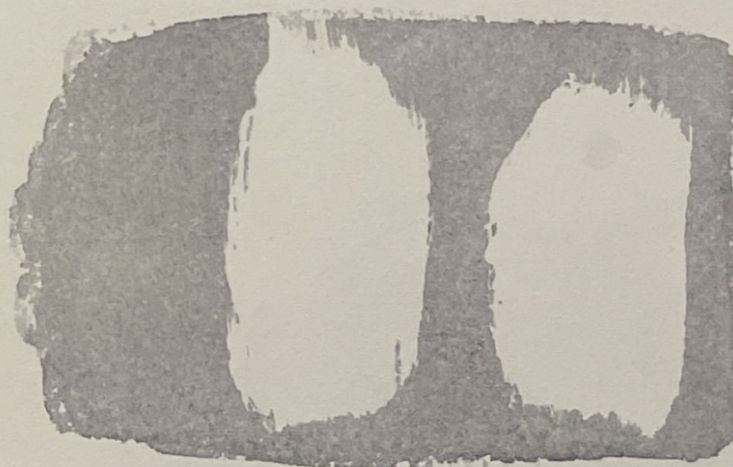
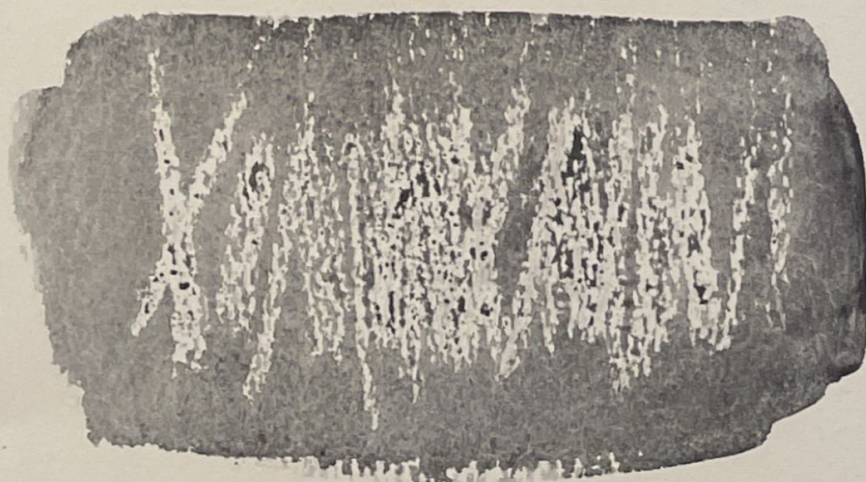
For an interesting texture, use a sponge! First paint a wash on a piece of scrap paper and then lay your sponge on this to absorb some of the wash. Now, lift the sponge off and transfer it to your good drawing. Press down and you will "print" the irregular pattern of the sponge.



A sponge can also be used to pick up excess liquid at the end of a wash or it can produce beautiful fleecy clouds. For either effect, you need a dry sponge that will soak up the color. With a wet sponge you can get effects for smoke, fog, or mist.

This ragged line comes from painting a wash over paper that has been marked by a wax candle or a white wax crayon. The water will not "take" over this wax, thus allowing some of the white paper to show through. Similar effects come from scraping a wash with a knife or razor blade.

You can use rubber cement to mask out areas in a wash drawing. First, before applying a wash, put down a layer of rubber cement and let it dry. Then, wash in your color, floating it right over the cement. Let the wash dry completely and then peel up the cement. Presto! Clean white paper!



Glassware and other shiny objects offer some exciting experiences for the wash artist. In doing these, a great deal of wet-on-wet blending is used. Bright highlights and generous areas of dark tone are also basic requirements.



Wash Textures

By now you have probably used up many sheets of paper experimenting with flat washes and graded washes. More than likely, you are now ready to apply what you have learned to some wash drawings of realistic objects. On these two pages there are a variety of objects that you can practice. Before getting your paints set up and "ready to go" take time to study each one of these illustrations so that you will know the special method the artist used to achieve the effects in each individual drawing.

The outline of these objects is provided so that you can turn your full attention to handling your brushes and doing the wash rendering. When you have completed all or most of the experiments on this page, try to do some more realistic wash drawing from objects in your own locale. Do some wash renderings of objects in your own house and, if possible, go outside and do some sketching directly from nature.

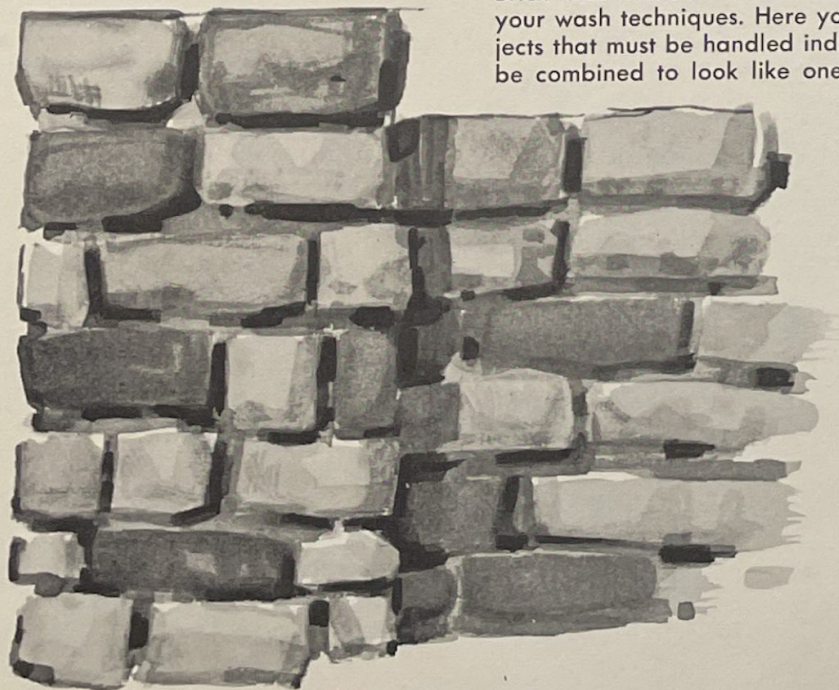
Even such an ordinary subject as a group of rocks can serve as good subject matter for a wash rendering. The play of light and shadows on these rocks makes an interesting design. Note how broad washes have been used in some areas and how, in others, small "spots" are worked into the picture.



For the commercial artist, being able to do a good wash drawing of a fur coat is often important. This is challenging work because the texture of the fur must be suggested without getting an overworked or "picky" look.



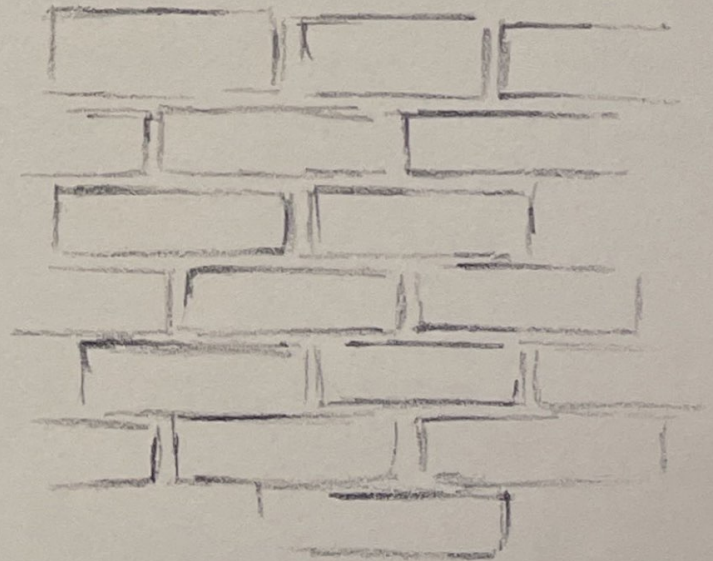
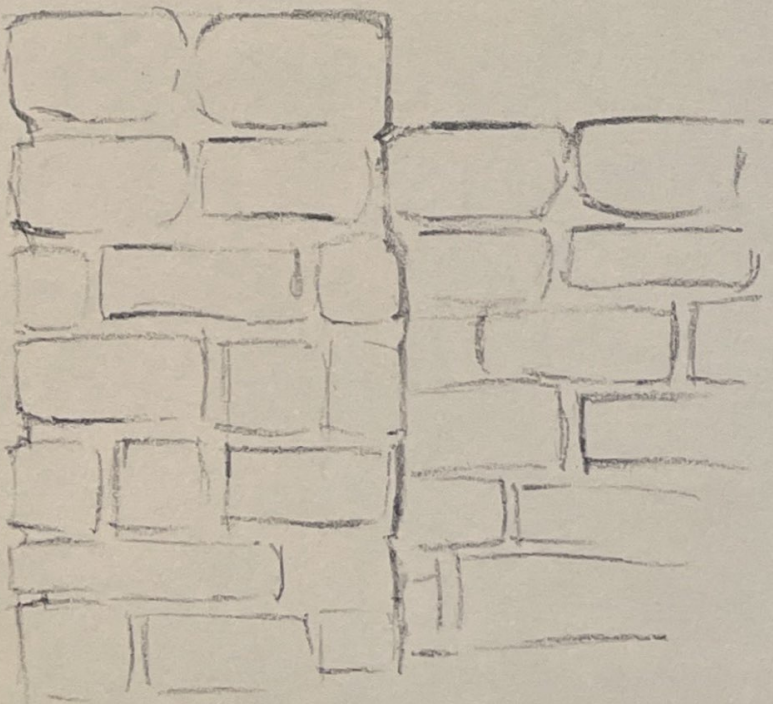
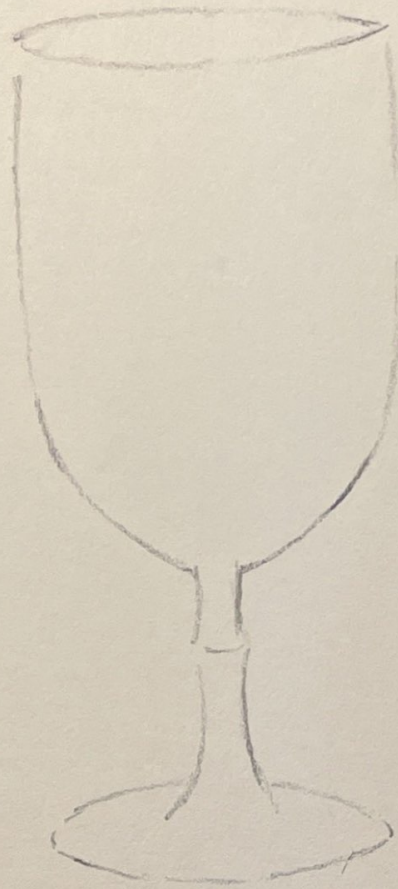
Brick and stone textures are good for disciplining your wash techniques. Here you have a group of objects that must be handled individually and must also be combined to look like one solid unit. Keeping a



unity throughout the entire drawing can be done by having a generous middle tone on all of the objects to tie the work together. Details, highlights and darker accents are also needed.



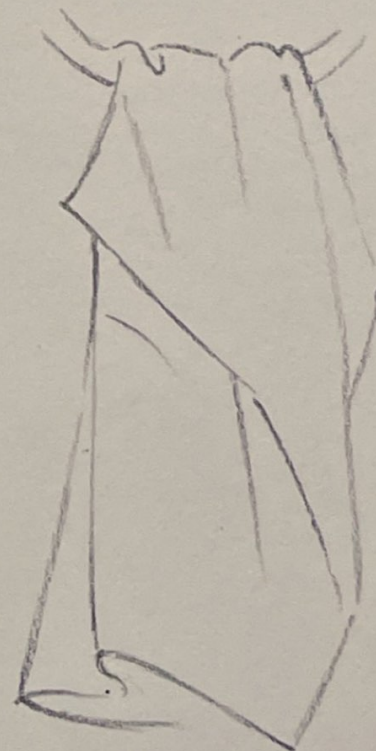
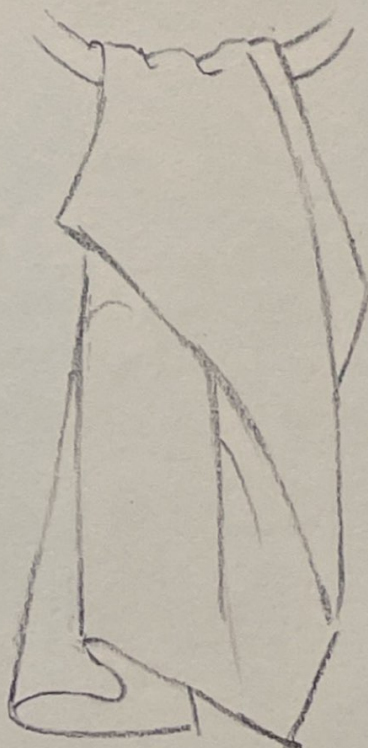
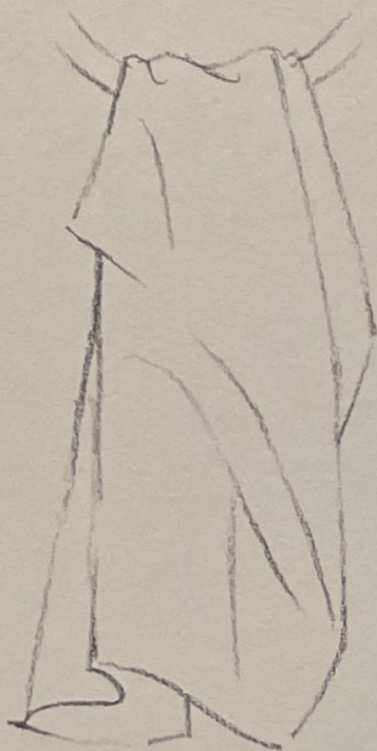
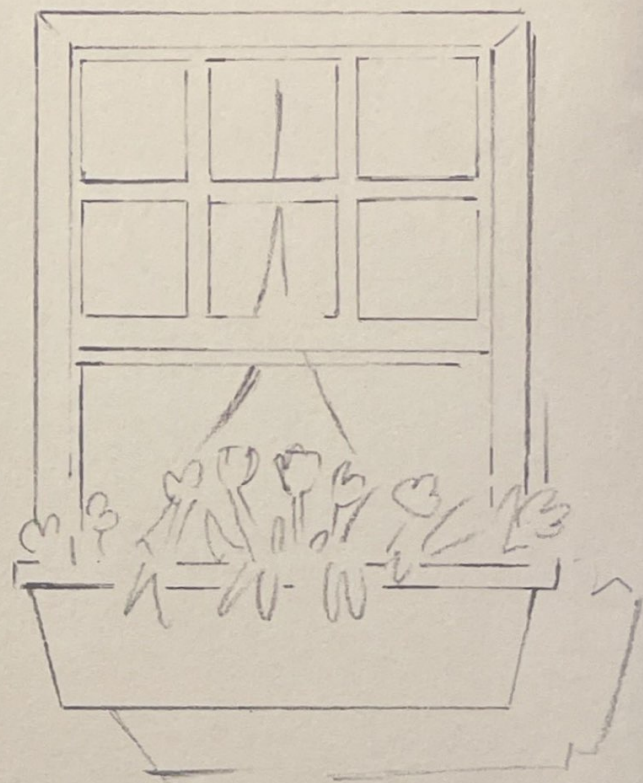
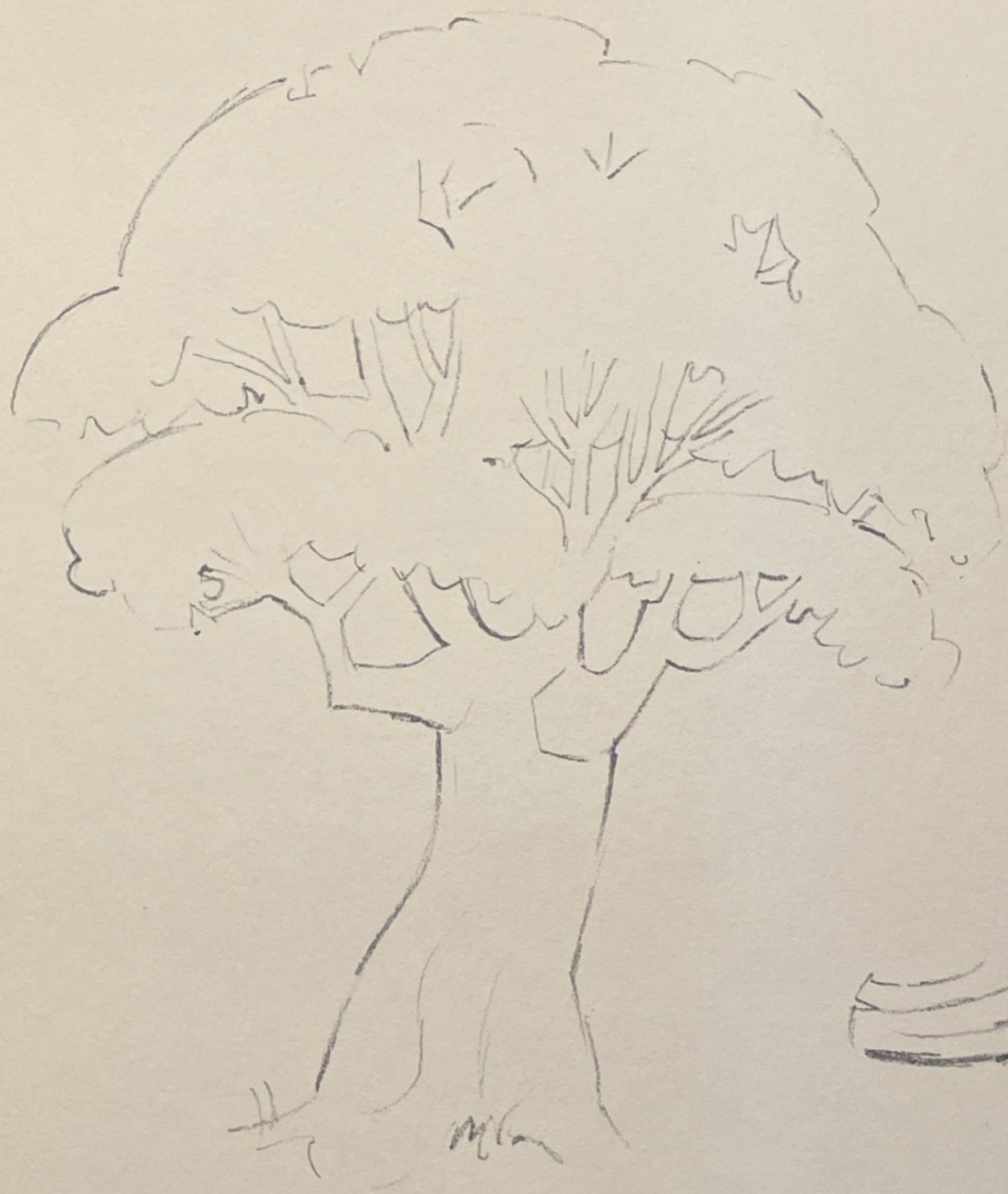
TRANSPARENT WASH PRACTICE



This practice sheet should be sent to the school. It will show us some of your practice work and will help determine your grade. Your instructor will study these drawings before he evaluates your lesson assignment work.

Student No. _____

Name _____





If the weather will permit, you will have a very enjoyable time making wash sketches out of doors. This rendering of the tree is a very good example of how you might approach a similar subject. Note how the artist has floated in large areas of light tone to represent the leaves, and then how he finished these areas by adding a few dark accents.



On the drawing of the window a strong light and shadow pattern is important to capture the structure and detail. Using these light and shadow patterns is important in most outdoor sketches. Why don't you try some drawings like this? Remember to use strong contrasts: bright highlights — medium grays and dark shadows.



In contrast to the rough bark texture on the first tree, this fallen log has been rendered in a smooth manner. The artist has used some wet-on-wet blending and there are some areas of dry brush.



After the basic shape of the towel was sketched in with a light pencil, the artist used his brush to outline these same contours.



In the second step, light tones were washed over a large part of the towel indicating the middle gray areas. Some of the dark accents were also established in this second stage.



The third drawing shows how some of the dark areas were mixed and blended with the lighter grays to give the soft fuzzy texture of the towel.



Renderings by Don Jardine

Wash Techniques

▲ This merchandise rendering is careful, detailed work; the product of a real craftsman. To achieve results such as this, many hours of practice are necessary. And, for that matter, it takes a great deal of time just to do a single drawing in this complex style. Check the amount of detail on the purse with the round sequins. Don't overlook the skillful blending and variations of tone on the three remaining bags.

► One of the nation's leading stores used this wash drawing in a newspaper advertisement for their fall and winter fashions. The arrangement of the figures, plus the variety of rendering styles, make this an eye catching piece. Note the use of flat wash on the slacks of the largest figure. And, a wet-on-wet wash is evident on the fur coat and the leopard skin vest. The coat has been further defined by the use of charcoal to indicate the fur texture.



Fashions, courtesy Dayton's, Mpls.



Figure by Jim Smith, courtesy Carlson — Kmart Corp.



Specially prepared by Charles Murphy

◀ This illustration has a great deal of charm. Both the subject matter and the fresh handling of the wash are appealing to the eye. The play of light and shadow patterns throughout the drawing also makes a pleasing, well balanced impression. All these effects are the result of careful planning and many hours of practice.

This fashionable illustration by George Hughes, one of Art Instruction Schools' National Advisors, makes good use of the wet-on-wet wash technique. A fuzzy, blurred line is employed on the tree leaves and the background figures. The soft, blurry look results from applying wash tone on a partially wet surface. And, for contrast, the foreground figures are "spotlighted" with sharp, crisp, more precise lines. Very effective handling!



Illustration developed by George Hughes

◀ Being able to handle a complicated wash is a sign of a skillful artist. This landscape is a fine example of such skill in action. It is difficult to keep a fresh wash and at the same time include many details. And, although much of the white paper shows through in this art, none of it was masked out or corrected with opaque white!

Checking Up On Yourself

The transparent wash lesson you have just studied is extremely important to you. This medium is so popular in art that it is worthwhile to devote enough hours of study and practice to the subject so that you are above average in your ability to render a good wash. So, let's review some of the main points in the lesson. This will give you a chance to see how well you have mastered the contents of the lesson.

Do You Remember That:

1. The materials necessary for a wash drawing are a water soluble black, water, a sable brush or two, a piece of appropriate paper, and a desire to master the medium.
2. The medium is called transparent wash because the paper actually shows through the paint in all but the darkest of values.
3. You can render either in a flat wash or a graded wash manner.
4. To get the best results, you should use a fairly heavy water color paper or medium surfaced illustration board.
5. Tipping your board at an angle is helpful for painting a smooth wash.
6. By the "tooth" of a paper is meant the roughness or bumpiness of the surface. You can actually feel the difference between two papers . . . one slick or smooth and the other with more tooth.
7. Kid Bristol has more tooth than plate Bristol.
8. The results of applying wash to a surface that is slick and non-absorbent are usually streaked and uneven.
9. One reason illustration board is used so frequently for wash drawings is that it is thick enough not to warp or buckle when wet.

First mix up a large quantity of light gray wash for the foreground area. Next, with a clean brush, wet-down this area with clear water. Be careful not to let water run over the lines of the fruit or knife blade. When the paper is almost dry (it no longer shines), quickly apply the light gray wash. Again be careful not to paint over the lines of the oranges, pear or knife blade. Don't worry if some wash runs over the edges of the apple or knife handle. These "slips" will be covered later when you finish these areas with darker tones.

After the foreground is completely dry, mix a dark wash and apply it to the background. Work carefully around the edges of the pear. While this background is still wet, add an even darker tone and let it blend and "spread". Check the first demonstration in the Special Effects section.

10. The more water you add to your mixture of lamp black and water, the lighter the value of your wash.

Did You:

1. Practice all the exercises marked "WHAT TO DO?"
2. Try some extra wash drawings of your own?
3. Experiment with different types of paper?
4. Practice enough so that you can actually notice some improvement in your work?
5. Get some strong contrasts in your practice exercises?
6. Progress to the stage where you can lay down a fairly smooth wash?

Transparent Wash Lesson

Before you begin your lesson to send to the school, be sure all of your materials are in "tip top" shape. Wash out your brushes, clean off your palette and get a fresh jar of clean water. Then, take the paper, with the outline of the fruit, out of your textbook and fasten it on your drawing board.

Try to mix your values to match those in the textbook and test each on a sheet of scrap paper before painting on your good picture. Have enough paint for each area so you won't have to stop your work to mix more. And, don't worry if the paper buckles a little. It will straighten out some as it dries.

To help you develop your rendering of this still life, we have provided an outline of the major shapes, and below have shown you the method used by the artist to complete the original art. With the steps are suggestions for you to follow. With care, you should be able to develop an excellent painting in transparent wash.



When the background dries, do the pear. While the wash is still wet, lighten the left edge of the tone. To do this, clean and dry your brush, and drag it over this left edge. Lighten the bottom of the pear also.

Lightly pencil in the wedge shapes on the orange next. Finish the wedges with a small brush. Use a darker value for the skin and show texture by making dots with a pointed brush.

The knife handle is easy — only 2 dark values.

On the apple, apply a medium dark gray to all areas except the small highlights. While the wash is still somewhat wet, add the middle dark gray. When that is almost dry, add the black. You can get the horizontal highlight by erasing into the wash after it is completely dry.

To soften the edge on the orange's shadow, use the same blotting technique that was described above.

